

going to come back, and we are going to confirm her. But for some reason, the ranking member of the committee would like to just embarrass Dr. Cook a little bit more.

First, they make all these unwarranted attacks. Then they block her in committee. Then they—well, they called a boycott to stop any committee action on another very qualified woman. And I might add, parenthetically, because the oil industry didn't like her.

One of the things I particularly like about Dr. Cook is she understands—and maybe this is the objection. They want a Federal Reserve that is more sort of corporate-dominated, corporate-oriented instead of putting workers at the center of our economy.

I know Senator MERKLEY has been one of the leaders here, always understanding that workers should be the center of this economy. That is what Dr. Cook will do in the Federal Reserve.

She understands the smalltown South. She understands the industrial Midwest. She has worked on the west coast. She has worked all over this country. She is international in the way she looks at things. But, fundamentally, she comes down to ordinary, middle-class people and those who aspire to the middle class.

She is ready to get to work to protect Americans from rising prices. We need her. We need all of President Biden's nominees on the job right now.

But, again, Senate Republicans could have earlier said yes—he didn't have to object—yes, we will go forward with Powell; we will go forward with Jefferson, but we want to embarrass Dr. Cook first. We want to show that we have the political muscle to defeat a really, really, really accomplished Black woman first.

That is what they decided, that scoring political points is more important than serving the public and bringing down prices.

So today, once again, a qualified Black woman is going to have to wait. A qualified Black woman is going to have to wait and wait and wait. We are going to confirm her, but she is going to have to wait a little bit longer until the two Members of the Senate who are sick can return.

The American people are going to have to wait, all because Senate Republicans have decided their political gamesmanship is more important than the constituents they are supposed to serve.

I, one last time, say: Make no mistake, we will confirm all of these Federal Reserve nominees. We could do it a lot faster if my colleagues wanted to cooperate.

I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. Mr. President, I have to say it is sad and shameful to hear the chairman suggest, which he has

done repeatedly now, including on the Senate floor, that there is some kind of racial bias against Black women that is a motivation for Republicans.

I would like to point out, for the record, the fact that on the Senate Banking Committee, every single Republican Senator has voted in favor of confirming five different Black women to different posts in just this Congress. President Biden's nominees who are Black women, and they include Cecilia Rouse, Nuria Fernandez, Adrienne Todman, Alexia Latortue, and Alanna McCargo. And yet we hear this preposterous notion that somehow the race of the candidate is what is going on here.

The fact is, we have a difference of opinion about what qualifies a person to serve on the Fed. And it is not some tiny, obscure minority that is concerned about Lisa Cook's qualifications to be fighting inflation when she refused to articulate any plan for dealing with inflation; it was the majority of the Senate who just voted. We just had the vote.

I should also point out that what is the difference here? The difference is, we want to vote, and you just heard the chairman block a vote on President Biden's nominee to Chair the Fed, Jerome Powell, and Professor Philip Jefferson. The chairman doesn't want votes on either of them, apparently, and certainly not on both of them; he just objected.

I would remind everyone that for months now, we have been trying to process the Fed nominees, and our Democratic colleagues refused. What we said was, there are five nominees. Only one of them we are going to object to processing. The reason was because of her radical views about using the supervisory powers of the Fed to allocate capital throughout the economy. That was a pretty radical idea. And guess what? The majority of the Senate agreed with us, and so she withdrew her candidacy.

We had offered for months now to process the other four. Earlier today, we were willing to do all three, but I think the record should show our Democratic colleagues refuse to allow us to have a vote today or tomorrow or this week—that is what we asked for; we used the exact same language the chairman had used earlier—on the Chairman of the Federal Reserve and Professor Philip Jefferson.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

Mr. BROWN. Mr. President, just to be clear, we did offer just an hour, maybe 2 hours ago—the ranking member and I have spoken for maybe 20 minutes, more or less.

Just to be clear, we offered in that unanimous consent request that we vote on both Chair Powell and Dr. Jefferson and simply delay the vote on Dr. Cook because several Members who wanted to vote for her were not here.

Instead, the ranking member decided he wanted to just, one more time, try

to embarrass Dr. Cook. It is not really going to work because we are going to confirm her. But just to be clear, my motion, only 2 hours ago, was let's move forward on those two. That was rejected by Senator TOOMEY.

I yield the floor.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the nomination.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Sherilyn Peace Garnett, of California, to be United States District Judge for the Central District of California.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Oregon.

TRIBUTE TO BJ WESTLUND

Mr. MERKLEY. Mr. President, a little over 10 years ago, BJ Westlund made his way from Bend, OR, here to our Nation's Capital to serve his fellow Oregonians as a correspondence assistant in my office.

Over the last decade, BJ moved up the ranks to legislative correspondent and legislative aide and then had the opportunity to move back to Oregon, move back to Bend, as my field representative.

He has done an incredible job in that capacity, but he is now, after a number of years in that key role, ready to start a new chapter in his career.

I know that I speak for everyone on my team, whether in Washington, DC, or in Oregon, when I say that we are thrilled to see BJ continue to grow and thrive in his career, but we are also very saddened to see him go.

Ask anyone on the team, past or present, about BJ, and there are a couple of things that might jump to mind: his signature sense of style for one. He loves to wear a good vest. Whether here in DC or in Oregon, it is hard for anyone to picture BJ without a good vest. And wherever BJ is, you can bet there is a tasty cold mix of iced tea and lemonade not far away.

And BJ has taken on the role of overseeing the Team Merkley candy desk while he was here in Washington, DC, making sure it was always stashed with really good candy.

Before we changed offices in Hart, the legislative team was split between two floors. BJ was upstairs working on environmental and energy issues and referred to that area as "Eastern Oregon." But without fail, you could find a steady stream of folks going up the staircase to stop by BJ's desk and grab a piece of candy and chat. It was our version of the office water cooler and a way for BJ to help build a sense of community between all the team members.

That is the fourth thing that comes to mind when people think about BJ, is his sense of community, his welcoming presence, his ability to connect. It is what made him such an effective legislative staffer, working with groups on their priorities, advocating for critical appropriations funding. And for the